

Rodman (W. W.)
LETTER

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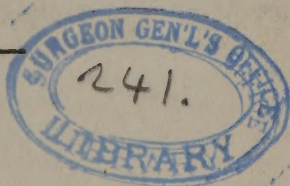
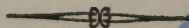
TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

Connecticut Medical Society,

BY

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W. W. RODMAN, M. D.



WATERBURY:
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1851.

LETTER

NOTICE.

Copies of this pamphlet are sent to a few physicians who are not members of the Connecticut Medical Society, who might be supposed to feel some little interest in the matter.

H. H. RODMAN, M.D.

WATERBURY:

LETTER, &c.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CONNECTICUT MEDICAL SOCIETY :

GENTLEMEN :—

The accompanying papers will explain to you the circumstances under which I address you. From them you will learn that a vote of expulsion against me, has passed the New Haven County Society, which only lacks your sanction, or that of your representatives, the “President and Fellows,” to be final. Were this act unaccompanied with ignominious charges, I should hardly trouble you in regard to it. Highly as I might esteem a connection with many of you, circumstances have led me to value less than formerly, a membership which at present, at least, would be merely nominal. But, as you will see, the ground of this separation is declared to be “dishonorable conduct” on my part. To each of you, then, I formally deny the charge, and hereby appeal to you to require through your delegates either that specifications of dishonor shall be produced sufficient to justify their action, or that the accusations shall be recalled.

The action of the New Haven Society, if sanctioned by you without further explanation, will warrant the conclusion that you consider a change of opinions and practice from the established form, to be dishonorable conduct, and as such, to merit that disgrace which would be incurred by the most gross misdemeanor. If this is a correct inference it will be well to have it so understood. While I would not court martyrdom, if the adopting and practicing Homœopathy is the occasion for it, I trust I should bear its pains and penalties with becoming fortitude. But if this is not the position which you are willing to assume, then I have a right to know on what other grounds I have been so deliberately found guilty of so gross an offence. As a citizen and a physician, I may justly claim that such a stigma be not affixed to my name without most distinct and ample proof of its correctness.

The only possible ground for the imputation, so far as I can imagine, is that I did not on adopting the Homœopathic practice, seek myself a severance of my connection with the

Medical Society. I freely confess to you that the course I should pursue in this respect, has been to me a cause of some doubts. I could not avoid seeing that in regard to it there might be an honest difference of opinion. To remain a member of the society, attending its meetings where I knew I should be regarded with aversion, and claiming the counsel and aid of its members which would be unwillingly rendered or altogether refused—such a course I felt no disposition to pursue. To propose on my part a separation which would be understood and represented as it has been in other cases, to imply that I withdrew myself from you because I considered myself unworthy of, or at least, not entitled to all those privileges which you accord to each other, seemed to me still more objectionable. I have been led to adopt a middle course—to avoid making any claims by which I might derive advantage from the membership, to endeavor to avoid giving offence, but to take no step which would imply what would be false—that I considered myself any less worthy of your esteem, or that it was any the less your duty to rank me as you do your most worthy members. If this has been regarded by you as dishonorable, I beg that it may be so stated. The public I think will be slow to place such an estimate upon it.

I will also admit that I have been conscious at times of a lingering hope, that in the progress of the changes which opinions on medicine are undergoing, most of us might, ere long, be found on a common platform, and I have desired that the retrospect might be unblotted by any acts which would impede a re-union of professional sympathies and fellowship.

The papers annexed are all of whose existence I have any knowledge which bear upon this matter.

I ask of you in justice to yourselves and to me, to instruct your delegates to dismiss the charges.

Yours, respectfully,

WM. W. RODMAN.

Waterbury, March 10th, 1851.

No. I.

NEW HAVEN, Sept. 9, 1850.

To P. A. JEWETT, M. D.:

Fellow of the Connecticut Medical Society:

SIR:—I hereby present W. W. RODMAN, a member of this Society, for trial on the following charges:

- 1st. For being guilty of dishonorable conduct.
- 2d. For being a vender and prescriber of quack medicines.
- 3d. For being an irregular practitioner, having adopted the homœopathic or infinitesimal system.

These charges will be preferred before the next County meeting of our Society, to be held in New Haven on the 15th of Oct. next. As a Fellow of the Society you will please give the said Rodman notice of the same, agreeably to the By-Laws passed in convention, May, 1845.

W. J. WHITING.

No. II.

[This was a copy of the charges and a notification from Dr. Jewett that they would be brought forward for action at the next meeting.]

No. III.

WATERBURY, Sept. 17th, 1850.

To P. A. JEWETT, M. D.:

SIR:—I received yesterday your notice of Dr. Whiting's intention of charging me at the next county meeting of the Conn. Med. Society, with being guilty of

- 1st. "Dishonorable conduct."
- 2d. "Being a vender and prescriber of quack medicines."
- 3d. "Being an irregular practitioner, having adopted the Homœopathic or infinitesimal system."

I have written to Dr. Whiting claiming as an unquestionable right, that I receive an explicit avowal of what "dishonorable conduct" he expects to prove me guilty of. I also wish to know what he means by quack medicines. I trust you will at once, have forwarded to me exact specifications on these points.

I remain your ob't servant,

WM. W. RODMAN.

No. IV.

[This was a letter to Dr. Whiting similar to the above. (No. 3.)]

No. V.

NEW HAVEN, Sept. 21, 1850.

DR. W. W. RODMAN:

SIR:—I have received your letter asking me to forward certain explanations with regard to the charges preferred against you by Dr. Whiting. I shall in compliance with my duty as a Fellow of the Med. Society, forward to you, without delay, any new charges that may be presented to me. Those sent are all that have been brought to my notice; and have been handed over to the clerk of the County Society, in accordance with the By-Laws, passed in May, 1845.

I am, yours, &c.

P. A. JEWETT.

NEW HAVEN, Sept. 23d, 1850.

To W. W. RODMAN, M. D. :

SIR :—Your letter of the 17th was received on Thursday, and I sat down to reply to you that afternoon, but was called away, and have not had a convenient opportunity since.

Your questions hardly need a reply, for you know, as well as I do, on what grounds your expulsion from the Society is demanded ; and here let me say that, as you know, I have no personal acquaintance with you, and of course no enmity. The charges were first drawn up by another, who called on me and stated *satisfactory* reasons for wishing me to take it out of his hands, and I certainly am willing to have the matter decided, whether a Homœopathic practitioner can remain for years a member of a society whose principles he and his brethren are constantly and openly vilifying. There will be very little hair-splitting in the trial of the case. The fact that you have notoriously practiced and recommended Homœopathy is all we wish to prove, and that I think you will hardly deny. As to the meaning of *quack*, I refer you to a dictionary, and certainly I know of no nostrum whose *virtues* are more impudently and absurdly vaunted than the inert globules or infinitesimal dilutions of Homœopathy. Disclaiming again any *personal* hostility, I am

Your ob't serv't,

W. J. WHITING.

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No. VII.

To THE CONN. MEDICAL SOCIETY FOR NEW HAVEN COUNTY :

GENTLEMEN :—

On the 16th of September I received notice that the following charges were to be presented to you against me, by Dr. W. J. Whiting :

"1st. For being guilty of dishonorable conduct.

"2nd. For being a vender and prescriber of quack medicines.

"3rd. For being an irregular practitioner, having adopted the Homœopathic or infinitesimal system."

The first and second charges are so indefinite that I sought from Dr. Whiting specifications in regard to them. By him I was informed that my request "hardly needed a reply"—that "the charges were drawn up and handed him" by some one else, "who wished him to take it out of his hands"—that he was "willing to have the matter decided whether a Homœopathic practitioner can remain for years a member of a Society whose principles he and his brethren are constantly and openly vilifying"—that the fact that I "have notoriously practiced and recommended Homœopathy is all" that is "wished to be proved." For the meaning of *quack* he "referred" me "to a dictionary," adding, that he "knew of no nostrum whose *virtues* are more impudently and absurdly vaunted than the inert globules, or infinitesimal dilutions of Homœopathy."

The first and second of Dr. Whiting's charges I deliberately deny. I have not been guilty of dishonorable conduct as a practitioner of

medicine. No assiduous "attentions to families usually employing another;" no "officious interferences in cases of sickness in such families" can be truly imputed to me. I have repeatedly declined overtures to take charge of cases under the treatment of others—and this until an opposite course towards myself showed that I was considered no longer entitled to "honorable" treatment. I have avoided criticising, censuring or ridiculing even before my own friends the management of individual cases under other treatment. In expressing my opinions of the merits of different systems of medicine, I have not made charges against any of them which are denied by their own practitioners. Neither "openly and constantly" nor occasionally have I "vilified the principles" of any society or school of medicine. While I do not claim that I have never been led to unguarded expressions, I assert that the above has been my habit and my aim. In these and in other respects my course has not been dishonorable, and does not call for any action on your part.

Nor am I "a vender and prescriber of quack medicines." I obtrude my opinions in regard to my "globules and dilutions" on no one. When my opinion is sought I express it freely as do others in regard to their medicines. Neither to the friends of Homœopathy nor to others, do I "impudently vaunt the virtues" of its medicines. I am not a dealer nor prescriber of any secret or patented remedy either for internal use or external application, nor do I directly or indirectly derive any advantage from the sale of such articles. Instead of using "nostrums," I encourage my patients and families to know so far as they please what I administer, and many of them, by keeping the most common Homœopathic remedies instead of their former domestic medicines, have the means of repeatedly testing the "virtues" imputed to them. I use any medicines in any dose which I think will benefit my patient, and select that which to the best of my judgment is most likely to effect that object. I hold myself ready to compare in a friendly manner, views of treatment and the effects of medicines with practitioners of any school or system.

Dr. Whiting explains the accusations he has brought against me so as to include them all in his third charge, which alledges that I have adopted the Homœopathic or infinitesimal system.

I freely admit to you then, that I am an "irregular" practitioner so far as to use Homœopathic remedies in infinitesimal doses, in nearly all cases where I prescribe or administer medicines. In the few cases in which I vary from this treatment, it is generally owing to the previous administration of Allopathic drugs, or to the habit already formed of resorting to them. In a still smaller number of cases, I have used remedial agents other than Homœopathic where I have felt and admitted my inability to do justice to this system. But if I have not always confined myself to "infinitesimals," I claim no extenuation therefrom, as it has not been from choice. It is my constant aim to resort less and less to the Allopathic effect of medicines. Already I use the active agents of the Allopathic school so little, that for the current year one grain of Mercury, or Arsenic, or Antimony, or Opium, would have supplied me with all I have used of either of these agents, in any and all of their preparations, Allopathic and Homœopa-

this; and the immediate and final rejection of the entire Allopathic pharmacy, would not cause me more regret than the loss of some single Homeopathic remedy in infinitesimal doses.

I admit, therefore, this charge of Dr. Whiting, but I do not plead guilty to it. Guilt implies, I need not say, some moral delinquency. This I utterly deny, and I protest against your taking any step which shall involve me in such an imputation. I do this to throw on those who instigated, and on those who would sustain Dr. Whiting's course, the responsibility of the action they propose taking. While I will not take it for granted that a majority of you would impute as criminal the holding opinions and adopting a practice which many distinguished Allopathists consider not incompatible with honorable conduct—if I am mistaken, I fearlessly appeal to a verdict "not long to linger," which must reverse yours.

Yours, respectfully,

WM. W. RODMAN.

Waterbury, Oct. 11th, 1850.

VIII.

NEW HAVEN, Oct. 17, 1850.

SIR:—At the Semi-Annual Meeting of the New Haven County Medical Society, held on the 15th inst. your written defence against the charges preferred against you, was duly presented and patiently listened to and discussed. Whereupon it was voted:—"That Dr. W. W. Rodman has been guilty of dishonorable conduct professionally, or as a medical man."

"The 2d and also the 3d charge was declared by vote as proved, and it was moved and seconded that Dr. W. W. Rodman be expelled from this Society—passed. It was also voted that the documents connected with this case be transmitted to the Secretary of the State Medical Society, to be presented by him at the Annual Convention, for its final action."

I "transmitted the documents to the Secretary" on the 16th inst.

D. A. TYLER, *Clerk, &c.*

Dr. W. W. RODMAN, Waterbury, Ct.

No. IX.

NEW HAVEN, October 15, 1850.

W. W. RODMAN:

SIR:—Since reading your papers, which I received yesterday, I have thought that you may have misapprehended the agency Dr. Whiting has had in your presentment for trial. In order to remove this, and to do justice to Dr. Whiting, I would say, that I had myself prepared the charges against you, and intended to have Dr. Bishop (the only other Fellow in New Haven) act as Fellow in the case; but finding Dr. B. out of town, I took the charges to Dr. Whiting and requested him to copy the charges, and sign them, merely to comply with the prescribed form.

Yours, &c.

P. A. JEWETT.